

# On the bandwagon



with Eamon Carr

**NAMES TO WATCH/** Who are the budding stars taking their first steps on the stairway to rock heaven?

AROUND this time of year we all like to don an imaginary talent scout hat and tell whoever'll listen just who're going to become big stars during the new year. It's a daft game but most of us play it. So next time you're afflicted with the meanderings of the person beside you at a gig, in your local or in the queue for Hatch 8 here are a few names to add to your list.



■ **ANDREW STRONG:** Instant megastardom

**Andrew Strong:** Like a real-life fairy story, The Commitments film pushed Andrew's considerable vocal talent into millions of homes worldwide. Now he's co-writing material for his debut solo album with the likes of Lamont Dozier, the legendary Motown writer, and he's got himself a management team which includes the men who work with Paul Young and Tina Turner. Andrew's imminent mega-stardom is a foregone conclusion but surely at long last we must now also be looking at well-deserved worldwide recognition for **Rob Strong**. His tonsils are still in great shape and he could teach many of today's chart acts a thing or two about on-stage presence.

**Tami Show:** A Chicago group, who took their name from an American '60s rock 'n' roll tv show, have perfected a seamless power-pop which mixes equal parts Blonde and Led Zeppelin.

With Mike Chapman producing, their debut album for RCA should be so outrageously radio-friendly as to make them stars.

**Manic Street Preachers:** The Welsh wildmen played a brilliant gig in Charlie's the same night Morrissey played the Stadium. Recapturing the essence of the New York Dolls and The Who, they don't

■ **NIRVANA:** due to turn the world upside down this year

claim to be creating a new musical form. However the anger and aggression which they bring to their guitar rock is likely to make them heroes for a new generation. **Nirvana:** The success of their single Smells Like Teen Spirit gave this Seattle thrash band a taste of superstardom which is undoubtedly going to turn their world upside down this year. The question to ask now is whether this breakthrough can be emulated by other hardcore outfits and, if so, which ones? Anyone laying bets on **Hole**, the three women and one bloke who're planning to totally subvert posey heavy rock? The only Irish group I've heard who might follow directly in the wake of Nirvana are **Pet**



■ **THE FRAMES:** something special

**Lamb.** They have the intelligence and the wit but have they got the nerve?

**The Frames:** There are a few other Irish bands who should come good this year and, of these, The Frames must rank on top of the list.

Fronted by Glen Hansard from The Commitments, the Frames owe nothing to



■ **LIR:** know how to persevere

the movie. They prefer to plough their own rattle-tattle furrow which shows signs of developing into something special.

**Lir:** Because they haven't been signed yet, it might take Lir longer than a year to get up there with the biggies. However they know how to preserve and their developing talent and sense of fun should see them through.

**Engine Alley:** Signed to U2's label, this band have been afforded the luxury of a decent budget and a top producer, Steve Lillywhite, as they perfect their Pop craft. On evidence, their imaginative moves and merry melodies should see them through.

**The Pale:** Now a trio, the Pale have built up what appears to be an unstoppable momentum. Signed to A'n'M, they're looking forward to a good year.

Two Cork bands, and groups from Limerick and Galway have featured as darlings of the British student, indie scene



■ **TWO TO WATCH:** Engine Alley (top) and The Cranberries (above).

over the past few months. They have obvious talent but that's never been enough in the music business.

With proper management representation, and by not setting their sights too low, it should be possible for both **The Frank And Walters** and **The Sultans of Ping F.C.** to become big stars this year.

**The Cranberries** need to display more verve if they're to capitalise on the strength of Dolores O'Riordan's dreamy vocals.

**Toasted Heretic** have worked their inspired way towards global acceptance with gleeful abandon. It's too late for them to stop now.

On the dance music scene acts come and go with refreshing regularity. Someone hums a catchy tune, slaps it down on vinyl, gets it to the clubs and hits are made, or not, as the case may be.

Some acts have an understanding of the rock medium and can keep a good thing going. However it's impossible to predict exactly what lies ahead on the club scene. Luckily I can think of two exceptions.

**The Sandals** are a bunch of Soho musicians who pay homage to the beatniks of the late '50s. Their clothes are streaked with paint and they always look as if they've been trying to re-write Allen Ginsberg's poetry. Great image and the music's not bad.

**Sheep On Drugs:** A confrontational kinetic art experience on stage, this duo is pushing a hardcore synth-based message. They want club-goers to think for themselves.

Perhaps not hedonistic enough to become big stars, they still deserve a hit for having such a good name.



■ **TOASTED HERETICS:** going up with gleeful abandon